

# A Comparative Study of Speech Acts of Japanese and American College Students (1): Greetings and Requests

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日米会話比較：挨拶と依頼

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日常生活での私達の言語による相互のやり取りは、挨拶、依頼、謝罪、賞賛、同意、拒絶、不満、感謝など、いろんな会話活動を含むが、この研究では、挨拶と依頼に焦点を当て、日本語を母国語とする日本人学生と英語を母国語とするアメリカ人学生との相違を論じる。この研究のデータは、長野市の清泉女学院短期大学の学生と米国、コネティカット州ウエスト・ハートフォードのセント・ジョセフ・カレッジの学生の協力によるものである。

## Introduction

In our daily lives, our verbal interactions with other people include a variety of speech acts, such as greetings, requests, apologies, compliments, refusals, agreements and disagreements, complaints, and thanks. In this study, which will focus on greetings and requests, the differences between L1 Japanese-speaking college students and L1 American-English-speaking college students will be discussed. The data for this study were supplied by students at Seisen Jogakuin College in Nagano City, Japan, and its sister-school, Saint Joseph College, in West Hartford, Connecticut, USA.

### 1.1 The research project

The purpose of this project was to collect data on the verbal behavior of native speakers of Japanese and American English in a variety of speech acts. This data, which reflects the way people behave when speaking their own language in their own

country, was then used as a basis for discussion of language and culture study.

## 1.2 Procedure

A Discourse Completion Test (DCT), consisting of ten common conversational situations similar to those used by Takizawa (1996), was designed. The students who took the test were asked to read each situation and to write exactly what they would say. A Japanese-language version of the DCT was taken by a total of 136 first and second year English Department students at Seisen Jogakuin College in May, 1995, and an English-language version of the DCT was taken by 88 students at Saint Joseph College in March, April, and May, 1995. The students who participated in this survey were all female. Those at Seisen Jogakuin College ranged in age from eighteen to twenty; those at Saint Joseph College ranged in age from seventeen to fifty-two.

Because of the wide range of ages at Saint Joseph College, the data were divided into three groups, as shown in Chart 1 below. Group 1 consisted of 49 Seisen Jogakuin College students (ages 18-20). These 49 Seisen test papers were selected at random out of the 136 who took the DCT to match the number of students in Group 2. The only criteria for selection were that the student had supplied her age and filled in all situations on the DCT. Group 2 consisted of 49 Saint Joseph College students (ages 17-20), and Group 3 consisted of 39 Saint Joseph College students (age 21 and over, or no age given).

Chart 1 : Data - by age			
Age	Seisen Jogakuin College Group 1	Saint Joseph College Group 2	Saint Joseph College Group 3
17		1	
18	25	24	
19	14	14	
20	10	10	
21-29			20
30-39			10
40-49			3
50-59			1
no age given			5
Total	49	49	39

## 2.1 Greetings

What are we doing when we greet someone? We are, first of all, recognizing that person's existence and trying to either establish a rapport with them or maintain a relationship. If we have the time, perhaps we are trying to start a conversation to exchange anything from pleasantries to essential information.

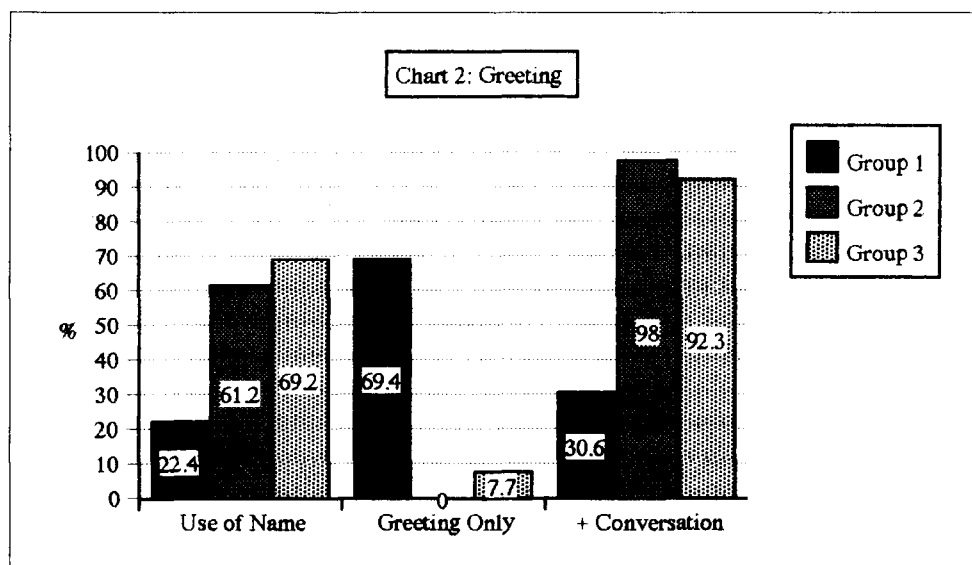
One situation on the DCT involved greeting a close friend :

On your way to the cafeteria for lunch, you see one of your best friends, Anne, walking ahead of you. It is the first time you have seen her that day. What would you say to her ?

あなたが昼食にカフェテリアへ行く途中、親友の中村恵子さんが前を歩いているのを見つけました。その日彼女に会うのは初めてです。彼女に何と言いますか。

The data were analyzed for the use of names and formulaic expressions and the addition of conversational remarks. The results are shown in Chart 2 below.

## 2.2 Results and discussion



In Chart 2, it can be seen that 22.4% of the Seisen students (Group 1) greeted their friend by name, 69.4% used only a standard formulaic greeting, such as 「おはよう」 or 「こんにちは」, and 30.6% added a conversational remark. By contrast, 61.2

% of the younger Saint Joseph College students (Group 2) used their friend's name, none of them used only a formulaic greeting, and 98% of them added some sort of conversation-opening remark. The results for Group 3, the older Saint Joseph students, were quite similar to those of Group 2 in the use of names (69.2%), formulaic expressions (7.7%), and use of additional conversational remarks (92.3%).

The situation specified that the speaker was on her way to the cafeteria for lunch and that it was the first time the speaker had seen her friend that day. 84% of the Seisen students used「おはよう」, 10% used「こんにちは」, and the rest used informal attention-getters, such as「おい」 or「おうっ」. When the friend was greeted by name, usually either「恵子」 or「恵子ちゃん」 were used, indicating informality. Only one student called her friend「恵子さん」. When conversational remarks were added, the topics included lunch, classes, and health, for example:

- おはよう！ 一緒にお昼食べない？ (Group 1)
- おはよう、昼食はお弁当？ (Group 1)
- おはよう。今日は何のクラスに出るの？ (Group 1)
- こんにちは、これからどこ行くの？ (Group 1)
- 恵ちゃん、おはよ！ カフェテリア混でてやだねえー。 (Group 1)
- あっつ、おはよう。今、来たの？ (Group 1)

61.2% of the American students in Group 2 and 69.2% in Group 3 called their friend by name or used an equivalent expression, such as “girl”, “hon”, or “snob”. None of them used standard formulaic greetings, such as “Good morning”. One student used “hello”; the rest used informal expressions, such as “Hey” or “Hi”, to attract their friend's attention. One student in Group 2 wrote that she would only “yell out her (friend's) name until she got her attention.” The other students used a greeting and included some sort of conversation-starting expression, for example:

- Hey, Anne! Where are you headed? (Group 2)
- Anne, wait up. What have you been doing all day? (Group 2)
- Hi, Anne. How's it going? How were your morning classes? (Group 2)
- Hi! How are you? (If she was wearing something attractive) I like your sweater! It looks good on you. (Group 3)
- Hi! How's your day going so far? Do you think they'll have anything decent for lunch? (Group 3)

Two students used greetings from foreign languages. One student in Group 1 used English, and one student in Group 3 Spanish:

-ハロー、元気？ 最近調子はどう？ (Group 1)

-Hola Chica ! What's up? (Group 3)

### 3.1 Requests

What are we doing when we make a request? We have a certain objective in mind, something that we cannot obtain, or do not want to do, on our own, something that requires the cooperation or good will of another person. When we make a request, we are trying to obtain our goal with the help of this other person. The making of a request involves strategy. We must word our request in such a way that the requestee will both willingly and quickly comply. The request strategy employed by the speaker will depend on his relationship to the requestee, the urgency of the request, the difficulty the requestee will have in fulfilling it, and the debt he wishes to incur.

Three of the situations on the DCT involved requests. One was made to a friend ("Notebook"):

You were absent from class yesterday, and you would like to see your friend's notes. How would you ask her for them?

きのうあなたは欠席しました。きのうどんな勉強をしたのか友達のノートをみせてもらおうと思っています。どんなふうになのみますか。

One was made to a younger family member ("Salt"):

You are at home having dinner with your family. You want some salt, but there is none on the table. You do not feel like getting up to get it yourself. How would you ask your younger brother or sister to get it for you?

あなたは、家族と夕食を取っています。塩が欲しいのですが、テーブルに塩がありません。自分で取るのはめんどうな気持ちです。弟か妹に取ってもらおうと思いますが、どんなふうになのみますか。

One was made to a teacher ("Report"):

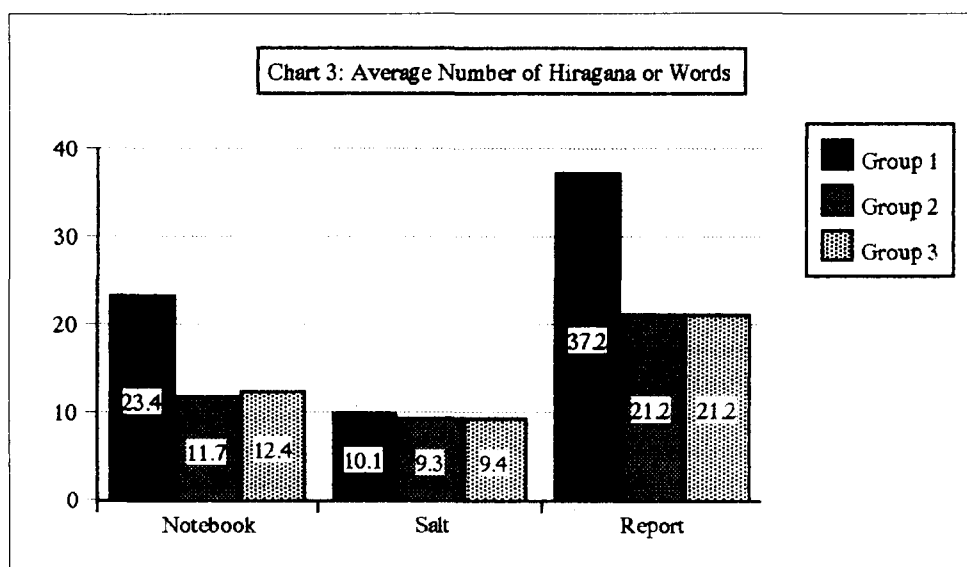
A report for one of your classes is due in a few days. You are sure that you will not be finished. Ask your teacher for permission to turn the report in late.

あるレポートの締切が数日でやってきますが、間違いなくおわりそうにありません。先生にレポートが遅れてもいいかたのみなさい。

The data were analyzed for length, giving a reason, use of name or title, use of "please", and negotiating or offering a reward. The results are shown in Charts 3 - 7

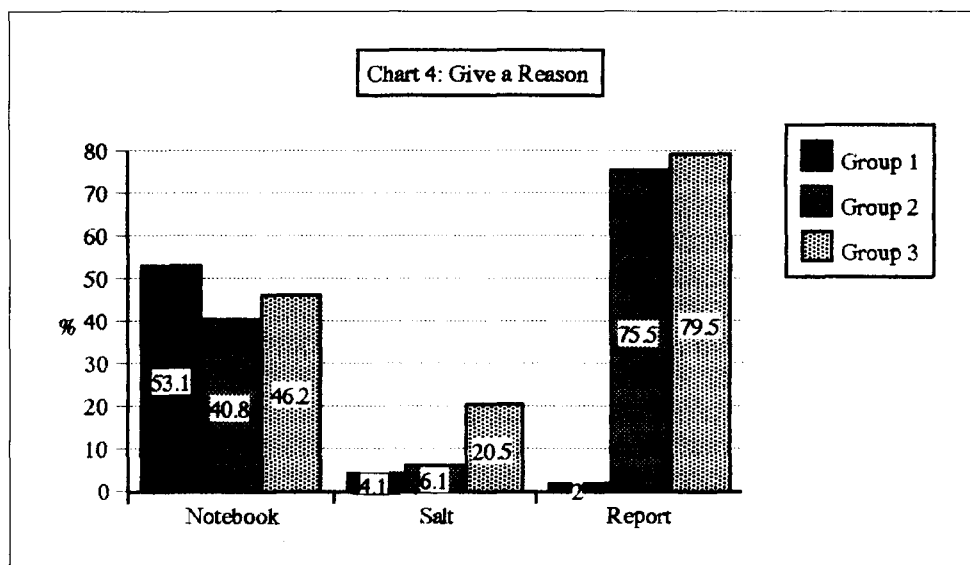
below.

### 3.2 Results and discussion



The numbers on this chart represent the average length of the requests in the data. For Japanese, the responses were counted as though they were written entirely in hiragana on a standard piece of paper (原稿用紙); for English, they were counted per word. Chart 3 is not intended to be a comparison of the length of requests in Japanese and English. Rather, it is intended to be a comparison of the length of the request to the requestee. It can be noted that in both languages, the shortest requests are made to younger family members in "Salt" (average length 10.1 hiragana for Group 1, 9.3 words for Group 2, and 9.4 words for Group 3). In English, requests made to friends, "Notebook", are only slightly longer (average length 11.7 words for Group 2 and 12.4 words for Group 3) than those to younger family members, while in Japanese, they are more than twice as long, (average length 23.4 hiragana). In both languages, the longest requests are made to the teacher in "Report" (average length 37.2 hiragana for Group 1 and 21.2 words for both Groups 2 and 3).

The reason for the difference in the length of the requests in Chart 3 is explained in Chart 4. In the shortest requests, "Salt", the speaker did not feel the necessity of explaining why she was making the request. In this case, the results for the Seisen students and the younger Saint Joseph College students were rather similar (4.1% for



Group 1 and 6.1% for Group 2). The older Saint Joseph College students, however, were more likely to give a reason for requesting the salt (20.5% for Group 3). For example,

- I'm pooped, would you mind grabbing the salt for me? (Group 3)
- Hey, Tom, would you mind getting the salt for me? You're closer. (Group 3)

In the case of "Notebook", all three groups showed the tendency to give a reason for their request (53.1% for Group 1, 40.8% for Group 2, and 46.2% for Group 3). For example,

- きのう休んじやたからノートみせてくれない? (Group 1)
- I couldn't make it to class yesterday. Would you mind letting me borrow your notes so I can see what I missed? (Group 2)
- Kristine, I missed class yesterday. Can I see your notes? (Group 2)
- I was absent last class, could you lend me your notes for a minute? (Group 3)

The longest requests in both languages and for all three groups appeared in "Report". In Chart 4, we can see that in English this was due to the explanation the student gave for requesting the extension, since 75.5% of the students in Group 2 and 79.5% of the students in Group 3 gave a reason when making a request. For example,

- I'm not going to be able to complete the paper by the due date because I've been overwhelmed by other assignments. Would it be possible to get an

extension for a few days? (Group 2)

-I had trouble with my printer. Can I have some extra time? (Group 2)

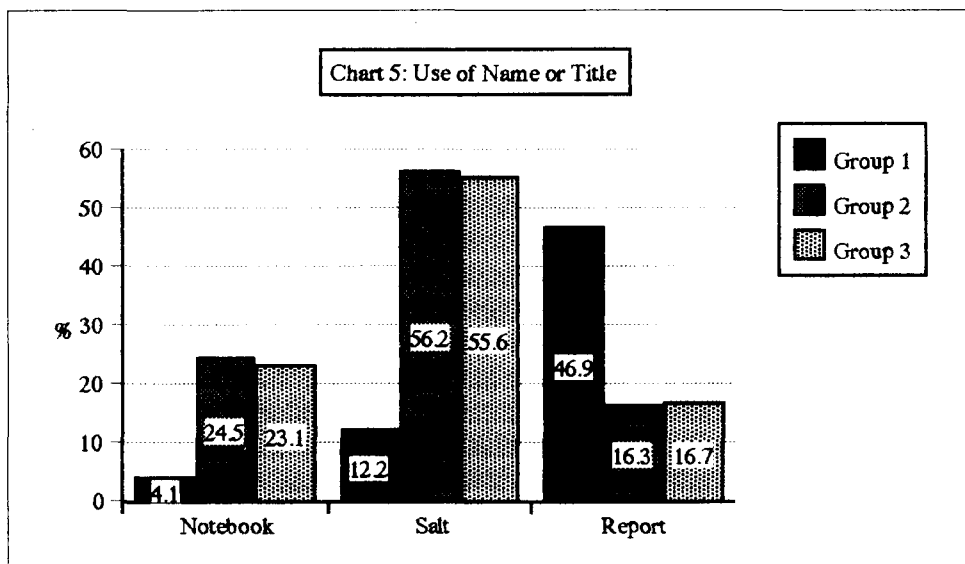
-I wanted to talk to you about the paper due Friday? I've had kind of a family crisis and between that and working I just don't seem to have enough time to finish the paper. Is there any possibility of handing it in slightly later? (Group 3)

Offering a reason for the extension was considered so important, that one student commented that she would "exaggerate her circumstances," presumably to increase her chances of having her request granted.

In the case of Japanese, the additional length came from the use of politer, more honorific language, rather than from giving a reason:

-申し訳ございませんが、レポートが期日までに間にあいそうにないのですが、1日おくてもよろしいでしょうか。 (Group 1)

Only 2% of the students in Group 1 explained the reason for the request at the time they made it.



The Americans were most likely to use a name when speaking to a younger brother or sister in "Salt" (56.2% for Group 2 and 55.6% for Group 3). Most often the first name was used, for example,

-Hey, Steven, could you please get the salt for your big sister? (Group 2)

-Meg, can you get me the salt? (Group 3)

Sometimes, a nickname, or other equivalent expression, was used, for example,



-Would you mind getting me the salt? Thanx (sic), dude. (Group 2)

-Hey, rug rat, get the salt! Please! (Group 3)

-JR, please pass me some salt out of the cabinet. (Group 3)

Eight students in Group 2 and one student in Group 3 indicated that they would use a name in the following way :

-(Name), can you do me a favor and get the salt? (Group 2)

They sometimes called their friend by name in "Notebook" (24.5% for Group 2 and 23.1% for Group 3). In this case, only first names, nicknames, or other equivalent expressions appeared in the data, for example,

-Sue, do you mind if I copy your notes? (Group 2)

-Friend, would you mind if I see your notes from yesterday's class?

(Group 3)

Two students in Group 2 and four students in Group 3 indicated a place in the request where they would insert a name,

-"X", I missed yesterday's class. Would you mind if I photocopy your notes? (Group 3)

They were least likely to use a name or title when speaking to a teacher (16.3% for Group 2 and 16.7% for Group 3). When a name was used, the form was usually title plus family name :

-Dr. Rau? Would it be all right if I hand in my report a day late?

(Group 2)

One student used only a title :

-Professor, I really don't think I'll be done with the paper by Friday. Could I get it in to you by Monday? (Group 3)

Again, several students only indicated the place where they would insert a name :

-Mrs. So & so, I hate to ask this, but I am really not close to finishing my paper. Is there any chance I can get an extension? (Group 3)

In contrast to the Americans, the Japanese students in Group 1 were most likely to use a title when speaking to a teacher in "Report" (46.9%). Only the title 先生 (teacher) appeared in the data, with no first or family name :

-先生、どうしてもレポートが間に合わないのですが、あと1日のばしてもらえませんか。(Group 1)

Although 12.2% indicated that they would use a name in "Salt", none of the students listed an actual name. All examples in the data were similar to the following,

-○○、ちょっと塩取ってくれない？ (Group 1)

-(名前) 塩とって。 (Group 1)

Only 4.1% of the students indicated that they would use their friend's name in "Notebook". Again, no actual names were found in the data, but it can be assumed that 「○○」 refers to the person's first name:

-○○ちゃん きのうの授業の分のノート見せてもらえるかなあ。 (Group 1)

-きのう休んじやって、きのうのぶんのノート写したいから、わるいけど○○(人名) のノート貸してくれる？ ごめんね。 (Group 1)

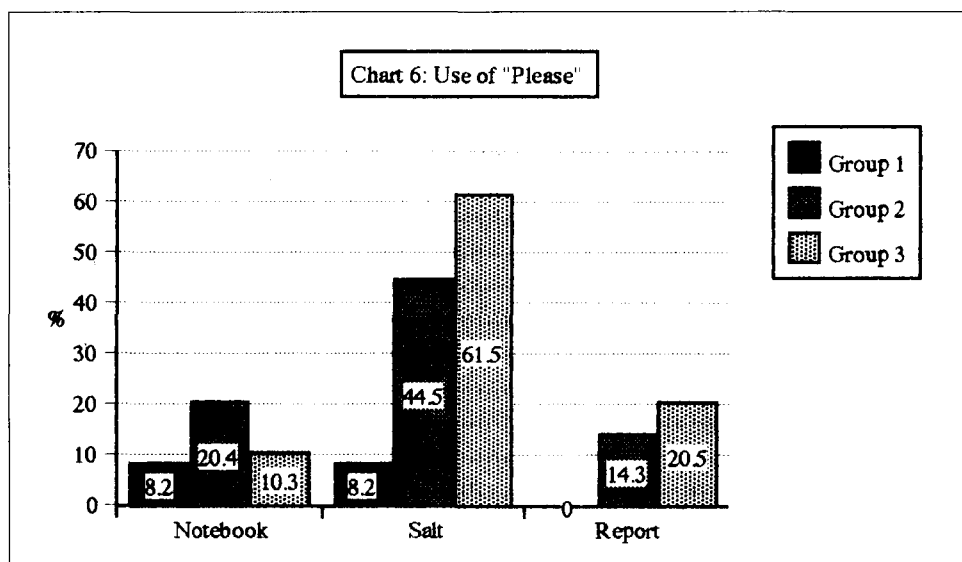
Although they tended not to use names in making requests to friends or siblings, the students in Group 1 did use attention-getters, such as 「ねえ」, which is similar to "Uhhh" and indicates that the speaker would like what follows to be listened to carefully. 18.4% of the requests in "Notebook" and 32.7% of the requests in "Salt" were prefaced with an attention-getter:

-ねえきのうやすんだからノート見せて。 (Group 1)

-あのさあ、きのうの(科目名)のノート見せてくれない？ きのう休んじやってさ。 (Group 1)

-ねえねえ 塩ないから、もってきて。 (Group 1)

-ねえ、塩取って。 (Group 1)



The most striking thing about this chart is the fact that "please" was most likely to be used by the students in Groups 2 and 3 in "Salt", 44.5% and 61.5%, respectively. This could be attributed to the training most parents give their children at home on the

importance of using “please” and “thank you” in the family setting. For example,

-(Sibling's name), can you please bring me the salt? Thank you. (Group 2)

When speaking to a friend or a teacher, the use of “please” decreased dramatically, to 20.4% and 10.3% for Groups 2 and 3 in “Notebook” and to 14.3% and 20.5% for Groups 2 and 3 in “Report”, for example,

-I was not in class yesterday, and I was wondering if I could please use your notes. (Group 2)

-Please may I copy your notes from yesterday's class?—Thank you.  
(Group 3)

-Can I please hand in my report next class? I was unable to gather all the information on time. (Group 2)

-May I please have a few days more to complete the paper? I have not had adequate time to put into it. (Group 3)

Instead of “please”, polite phrases were often added to the requests, for example,

-If you don't mind, can I borrow your notes from yesterday's class? (Group 2)

-I was wondering if I could copy your notes, since I missed class yesterday.  
(Group 3)

-Do you think I can have a few extra days to finish my report? (Group 2)

-I need a little bit more time with my report. Would it be possible for me to hand it in a couple of days late without losing credit? (Group 3)

In analyzing the Japanese data, “please” was translated as 下さい、ちょうだい、or お願い。As can be seen in Chart 6, these were rarely used in “Notebook” and “Salt” (both 8.2%) and were not used at all in “Report”. Instead, other mitigators were used to soften the request. For example, ちょっと (for a moment) was used by 26.5% of the students in “Salt” and 4.1% of the students in “Notebook”:

-ちょっと塩とって。(Group 1)

-ちょっと頼みがあるんだけどいい? 昨日学校休んじゃったんで、ノートを見せてほしいんだけどいい? (Group 1)

Expressions of apology were used by 10.2% of the students in “Salt” and 20.4% of the students in “Notebook”:

-悪いけど、塩とって。(Group 1)

-食べている時に申し訳ないけど塩を取ってください。(Group 1)

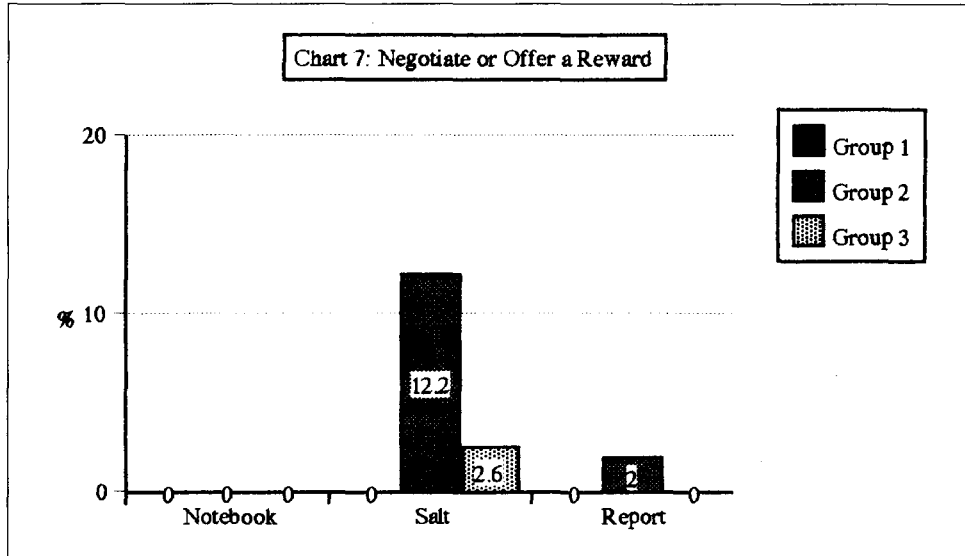
-ごめんね、昨日の授業のノートとってある? とってあったらみせて。(Group 1)

-あのすみません申し訳ないですが昨日のノートをちょっとかして下さい。

(Group 1)

-すみませんが、レポートげ期限までに終わりそうもないので 遅らせてもいいですか。(Group 1)

-先生 あの 大変申し訳ありませんが、レポートがどうしても間に合いそうにないので 少し遅らせていただきたいのですが。(Group 1)



As can be seen in Chart 7, the Japanese students in Group 1 did not mention any kind of payment for the request in any of the three situations. The American students did not feel any need to offer their friend anything in return for copying their notes. One of the American students offered to pay the teacher for granting her an extension, though she claimed this was a joke :

-I'm having trouble with the deadline for the paper. I don't think I can make it. Is there any way to get an extension?

I'll pay you! (just kidding) (Group 2)

Interestingly, however, several serious offers of a reward were made by the students in Groups 2 and 3 in "Salt". Sometimes these were monetary :

-If you get the salt, I'll give you a quarter. (Group 2)

-Jonathan, will you Pleeze (sic) get the salt for me? I'll give you a dollar. (Group 2)

Sometimes they were not :

-Peter darling, can you do me a favor? I'll love you forever... (Group 2)

Other students entered into negotiations with their siblings on the division of labor in the household :

- Can you get me the salt ? I'll clear the table for you. (Group 2)
- Anne, could you get me the salt, and I'll pour your drink. (Group 2)
- ... , would you get the salt ? I set the table. (Group 2)

### **3.3 Politeness in requests**

Brown and Levinson (1987) discuss the concepts of “positive” and “negative” politeness with respect to culture. They describe the USA as a “positive-politeness” culture in which “impositions are thought of as small, social distance as no insuperable boundary to easy-going interaction, and relative power as never very great” (p. 245). Japan, on the other hand, is a “negative-politeness” culture “characterized by self-effacement, formality and restraint” (p. 70). This concept is illustrated in Charts 8 and 9 below, in which the expressions used in the requests in Japanese and English are ranked in order of politeness. (This ranking was based on surveys of perceived politeness done by Ide (1986). )

Chart 8: Requests in Japanese Ranked in Order from Most to Least Polite

Group 1			
表現:	場面 2 「ノート」	場面 3 「塩」	場面 4 「レポート」
1. 暗示表現			10.2%
2. よろしいでしょうか。			4.1
3. よろしいですか。			4.1
4. いただきたいのですが。			2.0
5. したいのですが。			2.0
6. いただけますか。			2.0
7. もらえませんか。			10.2
8. かまいませんか。			6.1
9. できませんか。			2.0
10. くれませんか。			2.0
11. いいでしょうか。			6.1
12. いいですか。			45.1
13. だめですか。			4.1
14. 下さい。	4.1%	4.1%	
15. お願い。	2.0	4.1	
16. ちょうだい	2.0		
17. ほしいんだけど。	8.2		
18. もらえない。	2.0		
19. もらえる。	10.2		
20. くれない。	6.1	2.0	
21. くんない。		2.0	
22. くれる。	34.8	14.3	
23. くれ。	2.0		
24. ーて。	28.6	73.5	
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In Chart 8, it can be seen that there is a very clear distinction between the kind of expression used when making an informal request to a family member or friend and when making a formal request to a teacher. The type of language used to family and friends could be called "Inside Language". This is an informal style, in which the subject or object of the sentence are typically deleted, and a great deal of the effectiveness of communication relies on the mutual understanding of the members of the group. The type of language used to teachers could be called "Outside Language". This is a formal style in which the relative positions of the requester and requestee in the vertical society of Japan can clearly be seen.

Hints (暗示表現) are considered to be the politest way to make a request because

they leave the requestee with the maximum freedom of choice of response. This is considered especially important when making a formal request to a superior :

-先生、レポートがまにあいそうもないんですけど... (Group 1)

Chart 9: Requests in English Ranked in Order from Most to Least Polite  
Group 2 (Group 3)

Expression :	Situation 2 "Notes"	Situation 3 "Salt"	Situation 4 "Report"
1. May I...?	(5.1%)		6.2% (12.8%)
2. Would it...?	2.0		16.4 (15.4)
3. Would you mind...?	6.1 (33.3)	2.0 (12.8%)	2.0
4. I was wondering...?	10.2 (2.6)		10.2 (2.6)
5. Do you think...?	8.2 (5.1)		10.2 (2.6)
6. Do you mind...?	6.1 (5.1)	2.0	
7. I wonder if...?	2.6		
8. Do you...?		2.0	
9. Is there...?	(2.6)		6.1 (5.1)
10. Is it...?			2.0 (7.7)
11. Would you...?		10.2 (20.5)	2.0
12. Will you...?		4.1 (2.6)	
13. Could you...?	(2.6)	22.5 (25.5)	2.0
14. Could I...?	4.1 (10.3)		6.1 (7.7)
15. Can you...?		36.9 (15.4)	
16. Can someone...?		(2.6)	
17. Can I...?	59.2 (30.7)		24.6 (10.3)
18. (verb)... please.		2.0 (7.7)	
19. (verb)....		12.2 (2.6)	
20. Other	4.1	4.1 (2.6)	12.2 (12.8)
21. Non-response		2.0 (7.7)	(23.0)
	100.0% (100.0%)	100.0% (100.0%)	100.0% (100.0%)

In Chart 9, it can be seen that in American English there is not the same clear distinction between "Inside Language" and "Outside Language" that was seen in the Japanese data. There was a tendency to use politer expressions when making requests to friends or teachers: 35.2% of the students in Group 2 and 53.8% of the students in Group 3 used the expressions ranked one through ten in order of politeness to friends in "Notebook", and 53.1% of the students in Group 2 and 46.2% of the students in Group 3 used these expressions to teachers in "Report". On the other hand, only 6% of the students in Group 2 and 12.8% of the students in Group 3 used expressions in the top ten to a younger sibling in "Salt". (It must be remembered, however, that

requests to family members most often were made politer by the addition of "please".) The students in Group 2 showed a marked preference for the expressions using "can": "Can you ...?", which ranked fifteenth in order of politeness, was used by 36.9% in "Salt"; "Can I ...?", which ranked seventeenth, was used by 59.2% in "Notebook" and 24.6% in "Report". The students in Group 3 had less marked preferences in their choice of expression and were generally politer than the students in Group 2.

The data in Chart 9 contained two categories not found in the Japanese data, "Other" and "Non-response". "Other" includes hints, which are considered less polite than conventional indirect expressions in English because of "the higher ... interpretive demands on the hearer." (Blum-Kulka, 1986). The following are examples of hints, or "pre-requests" (Mey, 1993), in which the speaker is in a sense "testing the waters" to check the potential reaction of the requestee without going "on record" as having made a request:

-Dr. Vozzola, I know the report is due this Friday, but I've had so much work to do that I don't think I'll be able to finish and still do a good job.  
(Group 2)

-I'm unable to get the report to you in time. How will this affect my grade?  
(Group 3)

This category also included two responses in "Notebook" that could only be considered acceptable if spoken in a non-threatening tone of voice to a close friend:

-I know you're gonna let me see your notes. (Group 2)

-Hey, you're going to let me use those notes, right? (Group 2)

The "Non-response" category for "Salt" included one student in Group 2 who wrote the following:

-I wouldn't, because it's dangerous for young kids to have salt. (Group 2)

and three students in Group 3 who answered along the following lines:

-I would not ask—I would get it myself. (Group 3)

For "Report" Group 3, this category included four students who described what they would say, but did not write a line of dialog, for example,

-Explain that you won't be finished in time and ask for an extension.  
(Group 3)

and three students (including one who had written a similar answer in "Salt") who could not imagine themselves doing this, for example,

-No, because it is my duty to be prepared. I don't like special treatment. It



is unfair to the rest of my classmates. (Group 3)

Two students left the situation blank.

#### 4.1 Reflections on this type of study

One obvious limitation of this type of study is that it is written, rather than based on spontaneous, oral data. The answers reflect what the students think they would say, which may not be the same as their actual responses in these situations. It is also not possible to know what tone of voice would be used or what type of nonverbal communication would accompany the words. These paralinguistic features add nuances to the spoken word that are difficult to express in writing, and they can turn potentially rude remarks, such as, “Hey! What’s up, snob”, “I know you’re gonna let me see your notes”, or 「塩取って」 into friendly ones.

The major advantage of this type of survey, of course, is that the data can be collected relatively easily by the teachers who cooperate with the study abroad.

#### 4.2 The use of names

In the DCT used in the present study, the character in the “Greeting” situation was given a name, Anne in the English version and 中村恵子 in the Japanese version, but no names were specified in the “Request” situations. Naming the characters in all situations would probably have helped the problem of how to interpret the various place holders the students used instead of names, such as, “X”, “So & so”, “Name”, “...”, 「人名」, and 「〇〇」.

None of the situations specified the number of other people who were present in the situation, a factor that can affect the way things are worded and the tone of voice used. If others were present, as is quite likely in the dinner time situation in “Salt”, for example, the high percentage of name use in English could perhaps be explained by the need to clarify the identity of the requestee. In Japanese, especially when using “Inside Language” in the same situation, the subject was most often deleted from the spoken sentence, but would probably be made perfectly understandable in context by the use of eye contact, gestures, and tone of voice.

### 4.3 Implications for language teaching

Japanese students of English, especially those who plan to study in the United States, need to become familiar with expressions such as “What’s Up?” and “Wait up”, in addition to “Hello”, “How are you”, and other standard formulaic greetings. They need to learn to state their requests clearly, since hinting is not necessarily considered politer, and that, for Americans, offering an explanation when one makes a request is practically a cultural imperative. Americans who are studying Japanese, on the other hand, need to be aware of the fact that subjects or objects are often deleted from sentences, so they must pay close attention to the context. They need to be less clear when making requests, in order not to appear too “pushy”, and to remember that reasons for requests, and other things, may be expected to be “understood”.

### Conclusion

Successful communication in a foreign language depends on a knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary as well as the cultural assumptions of the people who use the language. The data on greetings and requests presented in this study, while insufficient for making sweeping statements about either Japanese or American culture, were at least sufficient for making some interesting observations which can help us both increase our knowledge of another culture and gain insight into our own. The remaining situations on the DCT, which cover apologies, compliments, refusals, agreements and disagreements, complaints, and thanks, will be reported on at a later time.

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